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O MX

Another dispute at Bastogne...

The 2012 FIM Motocross World Championship reached the half way stage with round eight at Bastogne in Belgium and once more MX1 did not disappoint. Clement Desalle and Christophe Pourcel dispute podium positions here as Tony Cairoli was too fast to catch on his way to a 1-1 scorecard

Photo by Ray Archer





MotoGP

Motoring with the M1

The two protagonists of the recent British Grand Prix...and both Yamaha riders are now prepping for the pilgrimage to Holland and Assen this coming weekend. Lorenzo claimed his third event in a row at Silverstone to make sure Casey Stoner is fully aware of the gauntlet that has been thrown his way in 2012. Crutchlow was superb to finish sixth with a broken ankle but another costly practice crash at his home event was frustrating

Photo by www.yamahamotogp.com







AMA-MX

Bright orange forecast...

As Steve Matthes highlights in his AMA section this issue, KTM and Ryan Dungey are flying towards another milestone in the company's history and their latest chapter in a reenergised North American venture. The 2010 National champion has now won the last six motos outdoors and neutrals eagerly await the return of James Stewart. Ken Roczen keeps their hand in the 250 class as well

Photo by Hoppenworld.com



PLAY





Battery power...

Roland Brown has been thundering around racetracks on Ducati and Triumph machinery so far for OTOR but this time takes a more docile and environmentally-friendly trip through Barcelona to the banking at Sitges Terramar on the Zero S. Read his verdict here

Photo by Alsina/Sperani



TEST

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ONE REASON

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GRAND PRIX OF BELGIUM

BASTOGNE · JUNE 17th

MX1 winner: Tony Cairolì, KTM

MX2 winner: Tommy Searle, Kawasaki



CAIROLÌ'S ARDENNES ASSAULT

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer



Bastogne was the stage for more of Tony Cairoli's brilliance. After his authoritative 1-1 performance the Red Bull KTM rider said that the soft and lined-filled Sans Souci track was perhaps the best the Grand Prix series had seen in two years. There was also a clear feeling that the Sicilian took as much satisfaction from winning his fourth meeting of the season (forging a 50% ratio for moto victories as well) on the carved mud as much as he liked standing triumphant in the 'home of Desalle' (his words).

The crowd were with the Suzuki racer but the fastest capacity to barrel across the hard-pack terrain lay elsewhere and not for the first time this season.

MX2 was another Searle and Herlings affair that clicked off another event on the list and kept the points standings tight. Searle scooped win number three thanks to his second moto chequered flag as the Dutch teenager showed no ill effects of the reprimands and 'wallet damage' from the past week.


It rained in Belgium. So much so that the paddock walkways turned to slime and added a further dimension to the sense of 'old school motocross' with a course that veered near trees and saw fans five-six deep at the fences. The rainfall helped soften and create the terrain on which Cairoli and co were able to entertain 18,000 including GP spectator rookie Ryan Villopoto. Bastogne closed a three week, three race spell of the series and Sweden is next up.





Searle's second moto was flawless, confident and full of intent. The Brit will need more races of this ilk to overhaul Herlings for the MX2 crown





What could have been. This was Bastogne on Saturday and it looked as though the meeting was going to be another mudder. A stiff breeze, warm sun and fantastic drainage turned the event on its head and made the Belgian Grand Prix surprisingly rewarding. Not bad for a new venue inaugurated at world championship level





Desalle was chasing his second victory on the bounce and although he fronted proceedings he had no answer for Cairoli. Again the Belgian had to force a smile on the podium and saw yet more points added to the gap to the world champion in the standings





Chest pain for Bobryshev and a broken front brake in the first moto continued the Russian's poor luck this year on the factory Honda. Team-mate Rui Goncalves battled to fifteenth although could barely breathe due to a snapped rib



Herlings ran out as a winner again in Belgium and must have been glad that the fuss surrounding his recent actions was starting to dim

Fans used the trees the best they could. It was worth it to see the lines and approach for a rider like Pourcel who was one of the protagonists again in MX1







Joel Roelants would lose the tussle for top Belgian honours in the MX2 class to Jeremy Van Horebeek again. The Kawasaki rider had his hands full





Cairoli wasn't eating too much of this...

CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

| MX1 OVERALL RESULT | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Riders | | |
| 1 | Tony Cairoli, ITA | KTM |
| 2 | Clement Desalle, BEL | Suzuki |
| 3 | Christophe Pourcel, FRA | Kawasaki |
| 4 | Kevin Strijbos, BEL | KTM |
| 5 | Gautier Paulin, FRA | Kawasaki |

| MX2 OVERALL RESULT | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Riders | | |
| 1 | Tommy Searle, GBR | Kawasaki |
| 2 | Jeffrey Herlings, NED | KTM |
| 3 | Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL | KTM |
| 4 | Joel Roelants, BEL | Kawasaki |
| 5 | Arnaud Tonus, SUI | Yamaha |

| MX1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 8 OF 16 ROUNDS) | | |
|---|--------------------|--------|
| Riders | | Points |
| 1 | Tony Cairoli | 345 |
| 2 | Clement Desalle | 298 |
| 3 | Christophe Pourcel | 292 |
| 4 | Gautier Paulin | 289 |
| 5 | Ken De Dycker | 237 |

| MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 8 OF 16 ROUNDS) | | |
|---|---------------------|--------|
| Riders | | Points |
| 1 | Jeffrey Herlings | 364 |
| 2 | Tommy Searle | 340 |
| 3 | Jeremy Van Horebeek | 308 |
| 4 | Joel Roelants | 238 |
| 5 | Jordi Tixier | 217 |



BELGIUM TRYING TO SET THE FUTURE

On Saturday at Bastogne and the Grand Prix of Belgium Youthstream and the FIM held a quite startling press conference that soon turned into a tirade-cum-warning for the future conduct of the riders and their teams. It was justified, and was the first time the governors of Grand Prix racing had been able to publicly comment on some of the disruptions of recent weeks but the depth of anger showed just how much the controversy had impacted the perceived image of the series. Admittedly there is a 'no such thing as bad news' perspective to the mess but the behavioural aspect led the FIM to state that a 'level four' stage of readiness had been reached and any further indiscretions would see the black flag immediately unfurled.

Following the scene were subdued Belgian World Champions Joel Smets, Eric Geboers and Stefan Everts to chat about a new purpose and direction for motocross in their country. The concern was over the diminishing pool of Belgian talent and the likely whereabouts of a 16th world champion for the country that hoist the sport as one of their major activities. Smets blamed the dearth of high level talent on the closure of tracks and the lack of a coaching and development support system for youngsters, something the former 500cc legend was reversing with his 'RedCross' initiative to help try and breed the Flemish stars of tomorrow. "We are losing our position on top of world motocross," said Smets.





MIRROR IMAGES FOR 2012

There are no shortage of stickers and graphics companies out there and the flexibility to make a production dirt-bike look almost exactly the same as the works machinery being thrown around on the National or Grand Prix racetrack is another one of the little strengths (or at least cost effective advantages) of motocross. Blackbird have an association with several Grand Prix teams and now have their design wares on sale, so Yamaha owners can have their own Philippaerts/Frossard/Simpson Monster Energy replica, new 2013 CRF450R

riders can try to get close to the unique works bikes of Bobryshev and Goncalves and Suzuki fans can opt for the full Rockstar guise. Kawasaki's make-up is a little on the simple side but a Gautier Paulin shade is there for the taking. Each kit is composed by a set of stickers for radiators cover, front fender, rear fender, swingarm, airbox, and fork protector. An integral part of the kit is the seat cover, personalized according to each team. For more info look at www.blackbirdracing.com

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RETURN OF THE KING...

By Adam Wheeler



I had the privilege to attend a day of the Ricky Carmichael University in the UK last week and although it was fascinating to see how the likes of RC, Stanton and Emig imparted their knowledge on an enrapt audience the biggest sensation I left Fatcat with was how friendly, accessible and 'normal' these former athletes were.

There was a time when Carmichael was untouchable; both on the track and off it to a huge number of fans worldwide. I remember the busy clamour for an autograph, moment of attention or recognition every time the American would come to the Motocross of Nations. From 2003 it seemed like Team USA needed a security detail just to cope with the surge of interest. Perhaps this first European RCU was always going to be a feverish display of emotion.

Carmichael (at best) was on the continent once a year so it's fair to say the followers he mesmerised through magazines, satellite TV coverage of the races and Youtube clips were given even less contact with a rider who called time on his career at the age of 27 because of the sheer relentlessness of the sport's demands in the USA. Carmichael trained and raced, and then some. He matured in the public gaze and now keeps a prominent role thanks to his position with Monster Energy, media duties and firm connection with Suzuki and Fox.

I'd interviewed Ricky a few times – taking advantage of the minutes he had for the press on those Motocross of Nations visits in 2003 (Belgium), 2004 (Holland), 2005 (France), 2006 (UK as a spectator) and 2007 (Budds Creek). I'd always found him receptive and an easy talker but the person I spoke with in Doncaster was a different animal. Carmichael was clearly enjoying the buzz from the Brits who were initially (and naturally) a little wary of the proximity they could take up. It was refreshing to see a motocrosser – albeit maybe the greatest many have

ever seen, certainly a marker for the modern era – treated like a famous footballer and Tommy Searle, Jamie Dobb, Jeff Stanton and Jeff Emig weren't exactly ignored either. The other riders were 'names' but it was clear who was the star attraction. Carmichael unwittingly transmits the weight of his achievements.

There was a time when RC was untouchable on and off the track...

The staggering 15 AMA titles are just part of his aura (maybe all the sporting greats have this 'glow') and some of those on the track with him during the sessions seemed to be riding with a sense of disbelief (either that or they really did need the coaching!).

It is normal to assume a professional athlete who has 'turned down the dial' can be a different person and there are many and much more severe examples than Ricky (Mick Doohan?) but it did make me wonder the degree of self-absorption and single-mindedness that an individual has to adopt to not be overly accommodating to the public that support and revere them.

I imagine it can be tiring and also draining to assume different roles over a race weekend but seeing the happiness that Carmichael's jovial manner and attitude to the fans – no request was too great, not a single person was rebuked – it did make me hypothesise that those champions who can also be champions of the people are onto a winner later in life for that rich field of nostalgia that also forms part of the fabric of so many sports.

DIRECTION FOR DOMINANCE

**THREE REASONS WHY PARTS EUROPE ARE SITTING AT THE CUTTING EDGE
OF THE VAST MOTORCYCLE PARTS AND ACCESSORY INDUSTRY...**

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer

If you haven't already bought an accessory through Parts' mammoth collection of 170 brands from around the world then there is every chance you soon will. A swift visit to the incredibly impressive German distribution centre of the new company and a rare ten minutes with equally purposeful General Manager Hans Lautem showed OTOR why Parts Europe will soon be one of the major motorcycle industry players on the continent.



1 The philosophy...

As the European extension of the U.S. Unlimited division as well as Parts Canada the company now offer a catalogue with almost 150,000 different part numbers. It is a vast amount of product and material and the firm's approach is to make sure it is filtered in the most efficient way possible for good business.

"Our philosophy is to let the dealer order just what he needs," says Lautem. "If he wants just one item then that is fine for us. Our programmes are designed so we are not pushing vast amounts of product into an inventory and killing a dealer. We want him to have what he needs and then still be doing business with us ten years down the road or even longer. I think that is the interest of everybody in the industry and who has a passion for it."

? was one of the main powers behind the establishment of Parts Europe in 2005 and spent two years accumulating planning and permits to allow the vast distribution centre to turn from a dream into reality. Upon OTOR's visit the site reminds us of the assembly line efficiency of a Japanese manufacturing plant and is quite simply the biggest collection of motorcycling product we've ever seen. It is hard to think of something that might not be loaded on any of the shelves in Trier. It is this set-up and strategy for business that positions Parts Europe on the edge of being leaders in their segment. The management are keen however not to let ambition be infused with complacency.

"I am very far from saying we are the best and I don't think anybody should do that," opines Lautem. "My personal philosophy - and I make sure it is known in the company - is that you can learn every day and you can get better every day. Improving your systems, improving your services, improving what you are doing on a daily basis; there is too much to do."



"Business in the motorcycle world should always be done in a way that you respect your partners, suppliers and dealers, whether they are big or small. Arrogance is the wrong approach in this industry. You should know what your customers want and give them a good service and chance to make money and survive. There are enough people already struggling out there. What we try to do is provide brands on an exclusive basis or that we have a good relationship with and whom allow us to supply a product at a level where the customers will be able to sell on."





2 The facility...

The desire to streamline and hone the method of how we can get our hands on the kit we need forms the soul of Parts Europe, but their modern 16,500m² (soon to be expanded to 27,500m²) distribution centre is the heartbeat.

The shiny new installation is actually situated in Germany's oldest city, Trier, on the tip of the western border and in easy reach of Luxembourg, France and Belgium. It services the continent and even as far afield as the Middle East and South Africa. Anybody keeping an eye on daily news reports might understand the reasoning for the company's German base but there are also other reasons.

"Germans are the most bull-headed and determined workers! They really push hard," says Lautem. "Our owner's roots go into Germany and it was always his intention that if the company would start on the continent then it would be in this country. As a firm you need to be strong enough to be able to buy the product and pay for it on time so we become a reliable partner to our supplier in the first place. We need to be strong enough to absorb the product, digest it and get the job done to distribute it across Europe."

"There are challenges. We know doing business from one location means we are slower to certain destinations but still we are working from a single source and that is a big advantage for us to be able to offer so much from one location. We are in the corner of three territories with Benelux, France and Germany. We are pretty quick everywhere but I guess we will only truly know over time if this was the right location."



FEATURE



***“You either commit or you stay out.
It takes a lot of time. We started from
zero and now the goal is to make Parts
Europe a rock solid supply source in
the industry...”***



PARTS EUROPE

AT A GLANCE...

- 15,000** storages capacity for tyres
- 23** docking stations for different types of trucks
- 250** homes that can be serviced for a year thanks to the roof solar panels that generate 1025 megawatts
- 4** House brands: Drag Specialties, Icon, Thor and Moose Racing
- 2000** packages handled an hour
- 75** Employees in Trier

3 The sport...

As with most major companies involved in the motorcycle industry the figureheads have first-hand understanding of their fields of expertise and Lautem is no different. "I have been into motorcycling since I was sixteen and I bought my first moped. It was the way to go and everybody had one whether it was a Kreidler, Zundappgar or a Hercules. It was a different world then. This is what we miss today, entry-level ages and ways into riding and the sport. Some countries have it but the scene has changed dramatically. The bikes and classes have altered and I'm a bit disappointed that some of the passion for the different models and possibilities has gone. I will always be a biker and enjoy it a lot. It is relaxing for me."

One if the ways in which Parts Europe is already making a splash - and from which that concise blue and red logo has already been seen - is through association at the higher echelons of motosport. MotoGP events, motocross and athlete sponsorship (Spies, Pedrosa, Philippaerts, Searle) presence in ATV, Enduro, snowmobile, drag racing and influence as far

afield as a land-speed record attempt. Parts boast a slogan of 'we support the sport' and their investment back into racing is another common but powerful means of reaching the people that need to know of their potential. "Even though everybody thinks Europe is one union we are quite far away from being a single market and a simple place to do business. There is quite a deep diversification and we respect that. To get the awareness that we require to show and tell everybody that we are here we needed to go in a different way. If I tried to be in every print medium across all of Europe I would fail and be bankrupt! But something like MotoGP with 200 television stations transmitting the event worldwide is a good route and other high level events carry the same worth. We need this exposure to really send a message out about our brands like Thor in motocross and supercross worlds and we want to do the same in other disciplines like drag racing, Snowmobile, ATV and Enduro as we have products and gear coming or stocked in the portfolio for these disciplines."



Parts Europe





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10

FEATURE



SCHOOL OF RICK

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer

When the greatest off-road racer of all time brought his Ricky Carmichael University to a sun-kissed United Kingdom for a maiden trip outside of the United States, OTOR was afforded a trackside position to eavesdrop on the tips and wisdom that RC, Jeff Emig, Jeff Stanton, Tommy Searle and Jamie Dobb had to impart...





At £500 a pop the RCU was not cheap but as someone commented in the build-up ‘how much would you pay for a track day with Valentino Rossi?’ This was no ordinary motocross school and it was clear to see from the 70-80 attendees on the second day in the sand at FatCat in Doncaster that the Carmichael effect was a powerful one. Riders not only listened but hanged on every word that ‘4’ had to say. RC – teaching his groups from seven year olds on 65s to expert level that included the likes of TT winner Gary Johnson and MotoGP star Bradley Smith across a sandy waves section – was not the lithe figure that once terrorised AMA supercross and motocross record books since his retirement in 2007, but the distinctive Fox gear and Suzuki was in place. That compact and feisty riding style that saw the Floridian packed right up to the bars across the bigger jumps was a fantastic sight again when Carmichael and his fellow tutors cranked up the speed in the free ride sessions. Casting an eye across the field it was interesting to see the spread of clientele. Most sported

their own name-emblazoned gear of the part-time racer so it was clear that Carmichael’s presence was being seized by those already familiar with the demands and idiosyncrasies of motocross. From kids to veterans to Grand Prix riders (STR KTM’s Jamie Law) backed by families and friends it was a diverse range and symbolic of just how open and accessible this motorsport can be.

For Carmichael, who never has to do anything with the rest of his life that he doesn’t wish to, RCU was about making up for some lost time with the fans and also some payback. “When you make the sacrifice as a kid to be a professional motorcycle racer you miss out on a lot of things growing up: school functions, dances and a bunch of parties. Once you make that sacrifice and you give everything then there can be time when the journey is over to make up for lost time. Without a doubt the sacrifice is worth it for sure and I was very fortunate with my racing. I have a different life now and I’m very thankful so that’s led to me giving back.”



RCU



PLAY





RC...

Track position, throttle tips, body position and a follow-my-leader tactic when he got on the track with his 'pupils', Carmichael also had a laid back 'hand around the shoulder' approach and gave each person some personal tips as they made their circuits. There was a bit of banter, and the one-to-one interaction was as treasured and valuable to the public as the actual tuition. "I put my pants on the same way as everybody else," he said to OTOR afterwards when we commented on his teaching methods. "You've got to make them feel warm and welcome and give them some confidence. Sometimes that means just a little pat on the back and make them feel that they're special." "Sometimes it is extremely tough to explain things at a beginner level because so many things came so naturally to me and I did it for so long. It is fun for me because teaching those fundamentals takes me all the way back

but it is hard. I think it is way harder that advising a top guy on lines."

"I think I have my strengths for coaching certain things and it is important to know those if you are going to do something like this. I believe I bring a lot of value to the experienced riders because when you get to a certain level it gets to be more of a strategy thing instead of the basics of riding a motorcycle. I think that is my strength in coaching. I can do the beginner stuff and from beginner all the way to intermediate to the pro-am guy but my true expertise is with the top echelon guys."

"Everyone is good with everybody but a guy like Stanton is really good with the kids and Emig really gels with some of the grown-ups. If they can get just a piece from each of us and some knowledge from all of us then that's all you need."

JEFF EMIG...

The former champion and voice of motocross and supercross for TV audiences rushed from Budds Creek to make the European RCU and worked on advice for starting technique. Clutch positions, stance and focus for arguably the most important part of a race was left to Emig who was handicapped without a start gate but this proved liberating in the soft sand.

"It seems like it has been a lot of work for the guys to make this happen and also for me. I jumped in the rental car right after the last moto, hauled ass to the airport, flew over night, got in the van and drove straight up here. It is so worth it when you see the kids

and the guys 'get it'. I was teaching the starts. I was strict when it came to the fact that the riders would get the message and I kept asking them 'what did it feel like?' and when I got answers like 'it was straight, it was stable, it was powerful' then I knew they were clicking and that was great."

"It is not easy to change bad habits and take on new skills and now it is the parents job to reinforce what we taught them and what they've learned and for the older rider its his duty to remember it all and correct himself and recall what Dobb, Tommy, Ricky or Jeff said."







JEFF STANTON...

The third American in the bunch was left to show technique and entry to slow and rutted turns. Stanton mixed a more scholarly approach but was also kind and patient to the small kids. Justin Barcia's current coach looked the more 'in tune' with how to treat and get the best out of the vastly differing levels of ability and attention levels. It was also Stanton who recognised the potential of the strong British fanbase for the sport after his 2011 visit to the classic Motocross des Nations. "I was over in the UK last year for the Farleigh castle Veterans Motocross of Nations. I went home and told RC and the guys that the enthusiasm for the sport in the UK is huge. We should con-

sider an RCU over there because they love to ride and they are really into it."

"I think it takes a few years to be away from that racing part to figure out how to talk about it to others...and also have kids. I retired in '95 and although I wasn't totally away from the racing – working with RC, McGrath and now Justin Barcia – having distance from that competitive part for a good while helps. With patience it falls into place."

"Interaction is 80% of the job. Making people feel welcome and keep their attention span. The guys will leave here feeling special if you make some special time for them and that's what it's about."





TOMMY SEARLE...

The British Grand Prix star flew away from Belgium where he had been victorious at Bastogne for the eighth round of the FIM Motocross World Championship on Sunday to be in place at FatCat on Monday. Searle was a reactionary teacher to a section that involved a fast turn and using a sandy berm to carry more corner speed.

"I actually really enjoyed it. You know I look up to him [Carmichael] as well. He has done what every rider wishes he himself could do. It is nice to be a part of this thing. I did a school for Kawasaki earlier this year."

"We were lucky with the weather on both days here and it was fun. The best part was giving people advice, seeing them listen and then doing what you've told them and it works out better for them and you can see the improvement. The older guys really want to take in what you say but the young kids learn so fast. It is cool to see some of the talent there already."

"At the moment I'm focussed a lot on myself and trying to win this championship but it would be nice to have more time to do things like this."

JAMIE DOBB..

Britain's last FIM Motocross World Champion (125cc in 2001) was instrumental in bringing RCU to Europe and specifically the UK. The ex-KTM star now rider manager gave tips on sand riding and using the bumps and features of the changing surface to help maintain speed. "There was some negativity beforehand with people sceptical of what it would be and whether Ricky would actually turn up! Monster Energy have got behind us a great deal and also Ricky's sponsors Fox. There has been great support and that has made it even better. At the end of the day it is not just a training day, it is an event."

"The most difficult factor in making this happen was timing. Jeff had to leave the TV booth and rush to the airport to make it. We not only need to find a space in all the guy's schedules but also be aware of when it the best time for the public. You could do it on a weekend but many of the little ones have national or local races and Ricky and crew are busy for so many in the summer. We can make it even better for next year, perhaps aim for a bank holiday and we'll listen to feedback."



THE PUBLIC...

Seven year old racer Ozzie Murray, who rides on weekends and some afternoons, might only have been alive for two years when Carmichael retired but the 65cc KTM rider clearly enjoyed the words these teachers had to say (even if they were in a funny accent). "It was really good. We went to different people and they showed us different routines. The start guy said we had to put our feet in front of the pegs and sit forward but not too much.

I like riding in the sand because you can make your own lines and keep getting faster and faster."

Grand Prix rider Jamie Law is right at the other end of the spectrum when it comes to motocross and even the MX1 rider felt some benefit. "I don't usually do any kind of riding like this. Not seriously anyway because I'm practicing and doing motos all the time. It's great to break the track down into sections and work on those and also the technique involved. I've learned a bit about myself and through Tommy's guidance I've seen that I hold the

brake on a little bit too long coming into the corners."

"I can listen to every word, and if I can take onboard just a fraction of what they say then it has been worthwhile and if I can get my lap-times down by a second or a half then I'll be more than happy."

Moto2 racer Bradley Smith summed up the experience as a fan of the faculty as much as a keen participant of the activity. "I saw it [the RCU] on Jamie Dobb's twitter and straight away I called around five people. I didn't care how it happened but I wanted to ride and hoped it wasn't full. It is an absolute one-off opportunity. Plenty of riding and some amazing stories coming from the guys. It is good to be around riders who have done so much in the sport and now they've stopped and they have this wealth of information, advice and experience to share."

"I was bought up on this [MX]. Cut me open and there's motocross in me. I don't think it is something you can lose."







MX1 GP racer Jamie Law: “Who better to learn from than Ricky Carmichael?!”





THE FUTURE...

The RCU is firmly entrenched at Daytona and has become an annual occurrence. It looks as though a trip to Britain might become a regular feature and maybe even joined by another country. "I think three or four times [a year] would be good," said Carmichael. "I'd love to spread the RCU brand for sure and expose it to the kids here in Europe. We won't do it if we cannot do it right and it needs to be events like this."

Stanton also feels strongly about not overexposing the concept. The maiden RCU Europe

would have worked at FatCat even if the notorious British weather would have been poor but there are not too many venues in mainland Europe that can say the same thing. "I don't think you can do too much of this stuff," the veteran says. "It is better to keep the amount of schools lower and keep that supply and demand ratio healthy. Maybe one or two a year and do it right with a first class operation like it was done in the UK with great sponsors behind it."

RICKY ON...

As well as the on-track work, the autographs sessions, the graduation and the slap-up lunch (coordinate by Mrs Dobb) the RCU also hosted an entertaining Q+A session in the Monster Energy rig with the former racers...

His next race: I'm gonna race Loretta Lynn's in the +25 class. It is a hobby thing. It is one of the biggest amateur races in the world and I grew up there. I always wanted to go back and experience it in a different way with my own family and actually enjoy racing there without any pressure. I'll go and have a good time!

Best place to watch a National: I'd say Red Bud, Michigan just for the variety of jumps. I think that is one of the coolest and Steel City is really cool for spectators. Unfortunately it's not on the schedule any more.

How often he rides: I try to ride twice a week, especially with a view to Loretta's now. Normally maybe once every two weeks

On his speed: it is so hard to tell. I don't think I could live with them now. Ryan Dungey rides at my house and I've been out there quite a lot lately and I reckon I'm 2-2.5 seconds a lap off the pace. I had my excuses!

On riding fast now: When you go months and months without racing your body loses the muscle memory. The frustrating thing for me is that when I'm riding these days my mind still knows what to do and where to go but my body can't really do it and it didn't take long for that to happen. When I retired I took months off at a time and you lose that muscle memory.

On the jokey racing bet with Emig: I'm getting tired of the last three times that we rode together he said he was having bike trouble! [to Emig] I can't even remember what the original bet was for...bragging rights? Emig: We were getting a little sauced up and over confident one night, maybe a year or two ago - and keep in mind that I retired in 2000 and his last race was in 2007, so another eight seasons - and he figured he could probably beat me with no front brake and no seat. I'm like 'I'll take that bet!' We've yet to have the race.



450s? CALL IT IN...

Well folks, things have gotten silly in the AMA 450 class. With Suzuki's James Stewart out with injury it's been a complete KTM domination with Ryan Dungey winning six motos in a row by large margins. It's a little reminiscent of 2008 when Stewart himself dominated the series but sometimes, here and there, Suzuki's Mike Alessi gave him some trouble early in the motos.

Well here we are again and Alessi is still on a Suzuki (for Motoconcepts) and still giving Dungey trouble here and there. The other guys? Forgetaboutit- no one can match Dungey and his speed.

It's been a runaway for Dungey and the hope for the fans is that Stewart comes back at Redbud (which is the plan) and at least makes the remaining races something to see. The championship, barring an injury, is over. Dungey's got this in the bag. Kudos to the KTM team for once again pulling it all together and making the new 450SXF work very, very well.

The battle behind Ryan is interesting, Alessi's got second right now but Kawasaki's Jake

Weimer is right there. Weimer is having a real solid outdoor season and has stepped up his game for 2012 outdoors. It's just a continuation of the great supercross season that Jake had. Armed with a new two-year deal for '13 and '14, Weimer looks to be a rider on the ride. For now though, he's got to get a little closer to Dungey. Doesn't need to win but has to be closer to start talking about what could be.

Alessi is a solid outdoor rider and even though one would think his privateer machine is not on equal terms with the riders alongside him, he's making it work with - are you ready for this? - good starts, good fitness and some speed. Mike won't quit, won't accept defeat and has even jammed it in there with Dungey a few times. Unfortunately for him, he's going 100% while Dungey cruises behind him at 80% waiting for the inevitable mistake from Alessi.

After that there's Andrew Short, Brett Metcalfe, Davi Millsaps and we're still waiting on Justin Brayton to get into the mix. It's going to be a long season in the 450 class for everyone not named Ryan Dungey.





James Lissimore

NORTH OF THE BORDER

The GP series is halfway through and the AMA also but over here, our friendly neighbors to the north have just begun their motocross campaign. Three rounds-in of the nine rounds scheduled and so far, it's a red, white and blue run up there.

The series starts on the west coast of Canada and moves east for easier travel schedules and the tracks vary from deep Lommel-like sand (seriously) to the rocky hard pack tracks on the far west. For the most part a Canadian has (almost) always won the MX1 series except for one season when Doug Dubach won and then Paul Carpenter five years ago. Four-time champion Colton Facciotti and two-time champion Dusty Klatt were forced to move over to KTM this year when the Blackfoot Yamaha team folded. Two-time MX2 champion Tyler Medaglia, also with Blackfoot last year, went to MX1 as a full privateer.

We're three rounds down and Leading Edge Kawasaki is picking up Blackfoot's string of dominations and writing their own history as they've won every moto in both classes but one. Americans Matt Georke (MX1) and Teddy Maier (MX2) have been almost perfect so far and have big leads in their respective classes. Maier raced MX1 in Canada last year and ended up third while Georke battled injuries but did man-

age to win a race up there in '11. Only Yamaha's Bobby Kiniry managed to beat the Kawasaki's as he took the second moto at the last round and the overall after Georke stalled it.

Simply put, in MX1 Georke has been on another level up there as Facciotti crashed at round two and separated his shoulder. He's been fighting that ever since and hasn't been able to get back to his old level. Klatt's been a mess as bike problems and crashes have knocked him down to fifth in the points. The surprise of the series has been the emergence of Ryan Villopoto's little brother Tyler who has stopped and started his riding career since he was a kid. After tiring of working a 'real job' Villopoto got a chance in Canada on the Leading Edge team and is a solid fourth and fifth place guy right now. Considering he'd never really raced a 450, it was a pretty good showing.

In MX2 it's past champion Maier who's been untouchable with KTM's Jeremy Medaglia able to be second best but not get to that top step. With Georke able to win in the sand last year despite being hurt and off the pace and with two deep sand tracks coming up, it looks to be his title and likely that two Americans will claim both championships this year in Canada...And the locals aren't going to like that one bit.

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BAGGETT'S BOUNTY...

By Steve Matthes

The 250 class here in the AMA series is really turning out to be something special. The quartet of GEICO Honda's Justin Barcia, Eli Tomac, Monster Pro Circuit's Blake Baggett and RedBull KTM's Ken Roczen are providing some great racing and you just never know which guy is going to be 'the guy' at the end of the weekend.

So far, through five races, it's Baggett that holds the edge and he's trying to not make the mistake he made last year. In 2011, after the halfway point, Baggett had all the momentum but sort of faded down the stretch. His 'come-on' at halfway and charge through the field tactic wasn't there the last half of the season. And I don't blame him for getting tired; it's a tough strategy!

And just as some of the Baggett magic went MIA, his team-mate Dean Wilson picked-up through the second half of the championship and captured the title while Baggett ended up third behind his other team-mate Tyla Rattray. And now this year, both Wilson and Rattray aren't there. In the career wins of everyone in the 250 class, Baggett's got it handily.

Barica's got two career wins, Tomac three and Roczen none. Baggett's got seven and - as we said - he's been in this position before. And right now he's got a thirteen-point lead over Barcia going into this key second stage of the series. The only thing missing from Baggett's repertoire has been starts, but at Budds Creek team owner Mitch Payton said they worked on that and found a solution. And that was evident in Maryland as Baggett was much improved. If you add starts to his superior fitness and speed...well this thing could be over before we know it.

And to think that at one time, Pro Circuit didn't even want him. Well, not entirely true but they did pick Wilson over Baggett in the off-season of

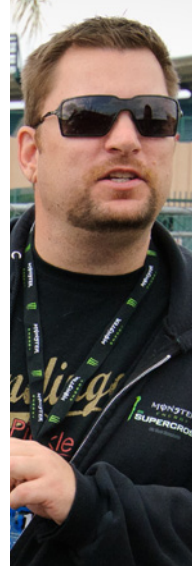
2009. That year both Baggett and Wilson were Team Green Kawasaki amateurs that were cleaning up in amateur races. After the Loretta Lynn amateur championships were over, Wilson and Baggett had choices to make: turn pro and show everyone what you had or wait and see where they could land. Pro Circuit had one spot open and each rider took a different tact to grab that spot.

Baggett loaded up the rig and did the last three nationals as a full privateer. Wilson elected to stay home and wait it out. Interesting choices for both riders and it looked like Baggett might have made the smart choice as he qualified fourth for his first national and then scored a fourth and a eighth in two of the six motos he did out of the back of the pits. And even though his bike broke and he crashed some, the speed was obvious to everyone.

But as we know, Payton went with Wilson over Baggett and it was a great choice as the victories and one outdoor title indicate. Baggett went to Rockstar Suzuki, won a supercross and went fast in the few outdoor motos he did before missing a year through a crash. The Baggett camp was not happy in losing out to Wilson but Blake sucked it up and proved his star was still rising. And then, after one year away, Pro Circuit hired Baggett when a spot opened.

And now Wilson and Baggett, never the best of friends, were on the same time with a green front fender in their sights. It was like the amateur races reincarnated! Wilson got the upper hand last season but this year it's Baggett's turn with Wilson out for the year.

And he's making it count. The title is far from over and the other three riders are great but for me, it's Baggett's title to win until further notice is given.



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TEST

GETTING GREEN...

THE 2012 ZERO S IS THE NEXT BOLD STEP IN THE LONG PATH TOWARDS MAINSTREAM ELECTRIC BIKES. HERE'S THE VERDICT

By Roland Brown, photos by Albert Alsina & Diego Sperani





TEST

ZERO S





It's no surprise that electric motorcycles have barely registered a flicker on the sales charts so far. There simply hasn't been a battery-powered bike with a tempting blend of performance, range and price. But Californian firm Zero's updated S model could be set to change that.

With lively acceleration and a top speed of 80mph, the Zero is fun to ride; and if you don't get too carried away with the throttle it has a respectable range of about 70 miles, roughly double last year's model. Okay, so the S-bike is still expensive (£11,795 in the UK), but recharging its batteries costs about £1.50...so far less than a tank of petrol.

The revamped Zero certainly opens up a whole new world of near-silent electric motorcycling, as a day spent riding it in the hills near Barcelona on its launch revealed. Like its predecessor the S-bike has the tall, slim look of a supermoto machine but it's much more substantial than the 2011 version.

That's partly because it has a more modern "brushless" electric motor and a much bigger, more efficient battery pack — rated at 9kWh instead of the previous bike's 4kWh. Despite the extra weight, the Zero is lighter than most commuter bikes at 155kg.

**“On the open road the Zero was
quick enough to be fun and as easy
to ride as any scooter...”**



ZERO S



TEST

After I'd turned the ignition key - there was no starter button to press, and no clutch or gear-lever - a green light on the dash came on to show the bike was ready to roll. Given a twist of throttle it leapt forward with the sort of acceleration you'd expect of a big scooter. The lack of sound was eerie as this bike is even quieter than the old model due to having belt instead of chain drive.

On the open road the Zero was quick enough to be fun, and as easy to ride as any scooter.

The S-bike was always ready with a burst of smooth acceleration, and got up to an indicated 80mph pretty quickly.

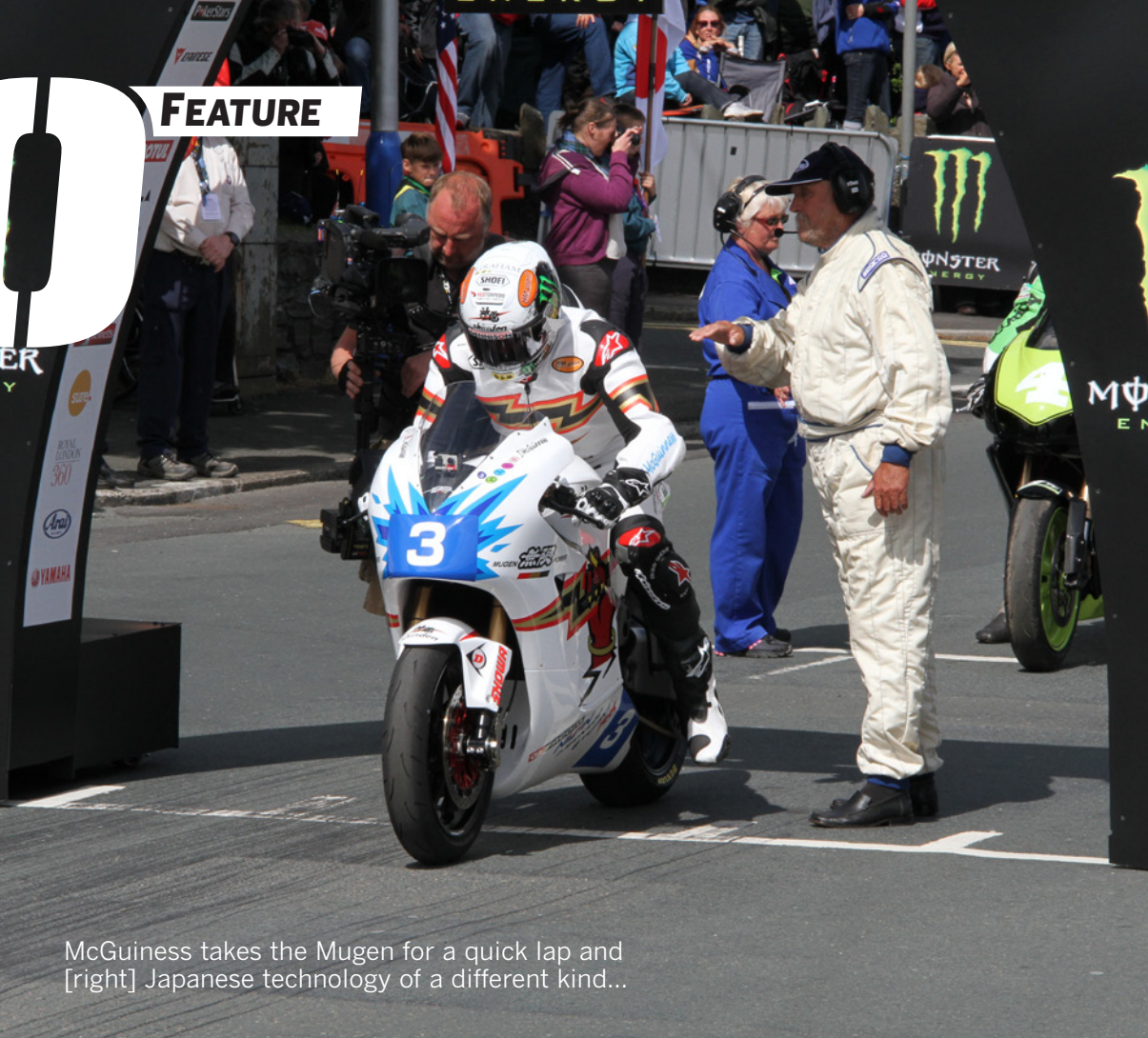
Handling was good; stable in a straight line and effortless in turns. In slow bends the bike felt slightly nervous, partly due to its fairly soft, long-travel suspension. The single front and rear discs gave plenty of braking power, in contrast to the rather underbraked previous model.



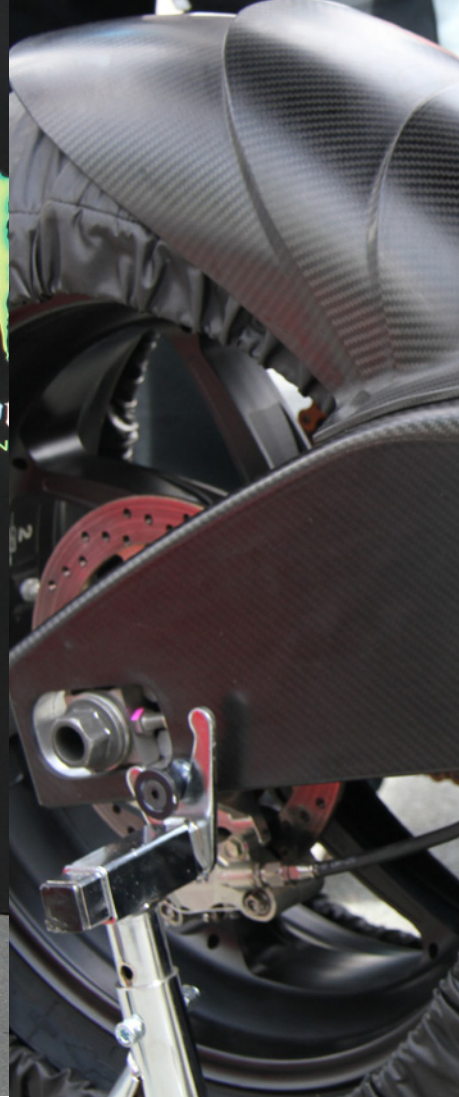


This bike's biggest improvement, though, was its range. The digital "fuel gauge" started flashing with two bars left after 70 miles, after a mix of gentle and fairly quick riding. On that basis the battery would be flat after 50 miles of hard use. But taking things easy could give 80 miles, or more if you pressed a button on the dashboard to select Eco mode, which cuts acceleration.

For plenty of riders even that range would not be enough. But for some, especially commuters, the Zero S is a practical proposition. Its high price is still an issue; you'd have to ride many tens of thousands of miles before the fuel saving added up. But battery powered biking has taken a big step forward.

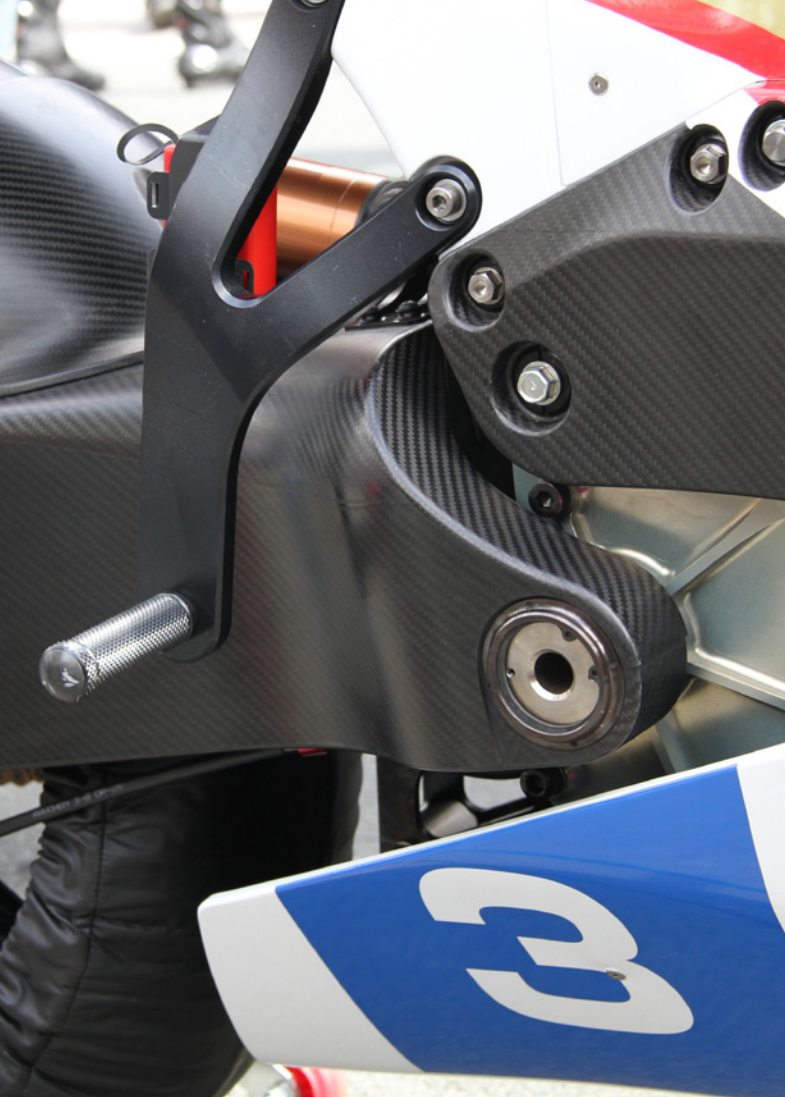


McGuinness takes the Mugen for a quick lap and [right] Japanese technology of a different kind...



Rutter in action [right] and banking some notes





ELECTRIC TT...

There's no direct link between the Zero bike company and TT Zero, the Isle of Man's race for zero-emission bikes. Another US firm, MotoCzysz, won the last two TTs for battery-powered machines. And at this June's race the Czysz team's rider Michael Rutter managed what he just failed to do when winning last year: averaged over 100mph to earn a £10,000 cheque from the Isle of Man government.

In fact the first three riders in this year's TT Zero all beat the magical ton mark, though it was only winner Rutter (who lapped at just over 104mph) who took the big prize — which he promised to share with his MotoCzysz team-mate Mark Miller, who came third. Splitting them on the podium was John McGuinness, who just missed his 20th victory, having won the Superbike and Superstock races for Honda earlier in the week.

McGuinness' entry had boosted the TT Zero's profile, partly because he was riding the first ever entry by Mugen, the Japanese tuning firm that was founded by Hirotoishi Honda, son of the legendary Soichiro. Mugen strongly denied rumours that their bike was an unofficial Honda entry.

The Japanese firm promised to be back on the Isle of Man next year, but they'll be hoping for a more competitive race. Of the ten starters, just four finished the one-lap, 37.75-mile event. Electric bikes are improving, but they clearly still have a long way to go.



FEATURE



ONE MAN AND THOUSANDS OF BIKES....

ROLAND TOOK DELIVERY OF A YAMAHA R1 AND HEADED TO BIKE RACING CENTRAL FOR A WEEK. HE BLOGGED ON THE WAY

Images by Pacemaker/Roland Brown

Thursday: Riding a borrowed Yamaha R1 up the M1 and M6 to Heysham through 200 miles of rain is surprisingly enjoyable. The racy 998cc four is comfortable, and sounds great with its high-level Akrapovic exhaust. Shame my throw-over panniers wear away the carbon-fibre silencers' stickers...

Friday: Luckily the sun's out as I collect a Ducati 1199 Panigale from Manx bike dealer and former TT racer Jason Griffiths. The 195bhp V-twin looks gorgeous, sounds fantastic and is brilliant fun on the Isle of Man roads. I avoid the crowded TT circuit and head for quieter roads on the old Jurby course in the north of the Island.



Saturday: The week's first big race is the Superbikes, won by John McGuinness on a race-kitted Honda Fireblade. The top guys average over 130mph on some laps during the six-lap, 226-mile race. Local veteran Dave Molyneux and passenger Patrick Farrance take the first of their week's two wins in the Sidecar TT. These curious three-wheelers used to race in grands prix but are rarely seen these days.

Sunday: The Sunday of TT week is known as Mad Sunday. Given that several road riders have died in crashes already this year, it's perhaps just as well that damp and misty weather keeps most bikers off the Mountain circuit, which is one-way only at TT time.



Monday: Sadly the Panigale has to go back, but I enjoy riding the R1, especially being able to make use of its performance on the unlimited stretches of Manx road. There's nowhere better to ride a superbike. New Zealander Bruce Anstey wins the 600cc Supersport TT, before McGuinness takes his 19th win in the Superstock race for modified production bikes.

Tuesday: Today I'm testing a standard Honda Fireblade. It's fast but I still struggle to get my head round the fact that McGuinness lapped the TT course at an average of 128mph on an almost identical Blade yesterday. It's raining again when I return the Honda, feeling rather humble.

Wednesday: The highlight of my week is riding the R1 in the Arai Parade lap, along with a handful of others including former grand prix stars Kevin Schwantz and Randy Mamola; multiple TT winners Phillip McCallen and Ian Hutchinson; and current British Superbike ace Josh Brookes.

Bray Hill, just after the start, is seriously steep and scary when it's flat-out rather than a 30mph limit! I catch up Kevin and Randy, who are slowing every so often to wave to the crowds, and follow them for most of the lap. Unforgettable stuff. Especially when Randy, who hasn't a clue where the circuit goes, leads us off down a side-road... After a U-turn he entertains the crowd with a burn-out that coats my R1's fairing with lumps of rubber.



Thursday: I'm testing the Suzuki GSX-R1000 that Schwantz rode yesterday, complete with Tyco race team stickers. It's quick, light and fun, though not as good at wheelies as when the 1993 500cc world champ was tweaking its throttle.

Friday: Another wet day so I'm mostly holed up in Douglas, the Island's biggest town. I found my room in a lovely Victorian terrace through the Island's Homestay scheme, where locals rent out rooms to TT visitors. Good value and highly recommended.



Saturday: Yesterday's racing was cancelled so they're hoping to run the main Senior TT today. But mist and showers keep the circuit dangerously damp and eventually the big race is cancelled — for the first time since 1907. At least the evening is dry enough to run the Lightweight TT for 650cc twins, won by Ryan Farquhar.

Sunday: I borrow a Husqvarna Nuda 900 from Ramsey dealer Paul Dedman. The torquey twin is fun on a gloriously sunny day. After returning the Husky I load up the R1 and board the 11.45pm ferry, arriving at Liverpool around 2am. After another blast down the motorway, mostly in pouring rain, I'm home at 5am. It's been a memorable trip.

RED LIGHT FOR ROOKIE RULE

Subject to approval from the Grand Prix Commission at Assen this weekend the 'Rookie Rule', which prevented MotoGP™ debutants from signing with a factory team, will be scrapped for 2013. The rule was originally instigated after a request from IRTA to protect the interests of the satellite teams, who felt that if a rider was fast-tracked into the factory crews, they had no chance of snaring and bleeding new and exciting talent.

However it is under consultation with the same satellite teams that the rule will disappear with the likes of Fausto Gresini and Lucio Cecchinello pointing out that housing a rider for a single season would seriously affect long term sponsor link-ups. They are also keen to keep the factories onside and by supporting this rule reversal will hope to continue to enjoy preferential support.

It is a similar situation for Dorna no doubt, who will use the abolition of the Rookie Rule

as a bargaining chip with the MSMA in their quest to introduce a raft of modifications to the technical regs. Rules under consideration at the GPC meeting in Assen are the introduction of an RPM limit, prohibition of carbon brakes, leasing cost limits, a standard ECU and a maximum one bike per team. This latter proposal may well be already dead in the water after many teams insisted the cost saving would be minimal, however the main aim for the series' organisers is for the rev limit and a standard electronic system to be implemented.

It would be a long shot to suggest that scrapping the Rookie Rule will do too much to change the MSMA's opinion, however it is an easing of the tensions after the CRT stand-off. While many still have their gripes with CRT, without a doubt its implementation is behind Honda's hints last week that they could be set to line up a 'production-racer' kit version of its RC213V; much the result Dorna and IRTA would have hoped for in the first place.

PBM GOING FOR OWN FRAME

In live interviews during the British GP, team owner of PBM UK Paul Bird announced that his outfit are already working on its own frame with which they intend to run two bikes in the 2013 MotoGP™ World Championship.

It is set to be a truly British effort, with two riders "one younger and one older" according to Bird, and with the frame being built with input from a former designer from Reynard Motorsport. He hopes to be able to test the frame before the end of this season.





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NOT ALL ABOUT THE PASSPORT...

By Gavin Emmett



With the Rookie Rule set to be scrapped in MotoGP for next season and Marc Márquez odds-on to join Repsol Honda, Ben Spies tweeted this week about the value of certain passports and how there seem to be favoured nationalities in MotoGP.

This is a complaint I've heard for years, more often than not from my compatriots in the UK, with the perception that being from a non-Spanish or Italian background is somehow a disadvantage if you're looking to make the top of the sport.

Personally, I think it is a bit of a red herring and something of a double-edged sword. It's true, there are more Spaniards and Italians in the championship than any other nationalities but by the same token they are the countries with the highest TV viewing figures and hence the most sponsors. It is inevitable that often these sponsors look to home riders to create regular visibility in their markets, as it's not possible for every backer to be part of a winning team. For me that's more a reasoning for the 'grid-fillers' but you cannot ignore the fact that the likes of Jorge Lorenzo and Dani Pedrosa are undoubtedly at the pinnacle of their game due to their incredible talent rather than any particular sponsor's preference. Similarly the 125cc champion Alvaro Bautista or 250cc championship runner-up Hector Barbera. Marc Márquez has proven that he is one of the stars of the future already and deserves his shot at the top.

Let's not forget, Nicky Hayden has earned his spot on the factory Ducati team, and similarly Spies himself has done the legwork to get to his position of privilege at Yamaha...but there are

still some who would suggest that the value of the US markets do much to keep them in place. Colin Edwards was regularly charged with only keeping his factory ride at Yamaha thanks to sales power in the US, some having quickly forgotten his two WSBK championships.

At the top end of the sport, talent gets you a long way, and simply put there hasn't been enough talent from the 'other' nationalities over recent years to merit too many seats at that sharp end. There have been masses of outside (read Spanish) support given to British, German and Japanese riders in the MotoGP Academy system, borne from the desire by the organisers to get these nationalities represented in the premier class on decent machinery.

Blame shouldn't be apportioned too readily to those already involved in MotoGP, I think national associations have much to answer for.

If the Britains, Germanys and USAs of this world want to be represented in Grand Prix, their national series need to reflect that desire. These championships are all too often geared towards production racing – no doubt for cost reasons. However the creation of Moto2 and Moto3 are ideal, reasonably-priced platforms for riders to learn the trade and then also give the opportunity for wildcard appearances to gauge the rider's level. Notably both the CEV (Spain) and CIV (Italy) run Moto2 and Moto3 alongside their production-racing series.

In my opinion it's the only way that riders with those 'less valuable' passports can start to show their real talent and get their green card into the far reaches of the World Championship.



BACKPAGE

2012 Monster Energy girls
By Ray Archer







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Adam Wheeler Editor and FIM MXGP correspondent

Ray Archer Photographer

Steve Cox Photo-journalist and AMA MX and SX correspondent

Steve Matthes AMA MX and SX correspondent

Matthew Roberts Television Presenter and MotoGP correspondent

Gavin Emmett TV commentator/Presenter and MotoGP correspondent

Núria Garcia, Paula Mastrangelo & Tactilestudio Design

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